



Department of Justice

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAVY ENGINEER ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO SEND USS GERALD R. FORD SCHEMATICS TO THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT

Mostafa Ahmed Awwad, 35, of Yorktown, Virginia, was arrested today on charges of attempting to steal schematics of the Navy's newest nuclear aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, and pass the schematics to whom he believed was an Egyptian government official.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Carlin, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente for the Eastern District of Virginia, Special Agent in Charge Royce E. Curtin of the FBI's Norfolk Field Office and Special Agent in Charge Susan Triesch of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's Norfolk, Virginia, Field Office made the announcement.

Awwad is charged with two counts of attempting to export defense articles and technical data, and faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on each count if convicted. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. Criminal indictments are only charges and not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty.

According to an FBI affidavit submitted to the court in support of search warrants, Awwad began working for the Department of Navy in February 2014 as a civilian general engineer in the Nuclear Engineering and Planning Department at Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

Based on joint investigation, an FBI undercover agent speaking in Arabic contacted Awwad by telephone on Sept. 18, 2014, and asked to meet him the following day. Without seeking additional information from the caller, Awwad agreed. The next day, Awwad met with the undercover FBI agent, who was posing as an Egyptian intelligence officer, in a park in Hampton, Virginia. During the meeting Awwad claimed it was his intention to utilize his position of trust with the U.S. Navy to obtain military technology for use by the Egyptian government, including but not limited to, the designs of the USS Gerald R. Ford nuclear aircraft carrier. Awwad agreed to conduct clandestine communications with the undercover FBI agent by email and unattributable telephones and to conduct "dead drops" in a concealed location in the park.

On Oct. 9, 2014, Awwad and the undercover FBI agent met at a hotel where Awwad described a detailed plan to circumvent U.S. Navy computer security by installing software on his restricted computer system that would enable him to copy documents without causing a security alert. At this time, Awwad also provided the undercover FBI agent four computer aided drawings of a U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier downloaded from the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Information system. These drawings were marked with warnings that foreign distribution could result in criminal prosecution. During the discussion, Awwad indicated his understanding that the drawings would be sent to and used in Egypt. Awwad also asked the undercover FBI agent for \$1,500 to purchase a pinhole camera he would wear around the shipyard to photograph restricted material. At the conclusion of the meeting, Awwad agreed to provide the undercover FBI agent with passport photos which would be used to produce a fraudulent Egyptian passport so that Awwad could travel to Egypt without alerting U.S. government officials.

On Oct. 23, 2014, Awwad traveled to the pre-arranged dead drop site, situated on a secluded hiking trail in a park, and utilized a concealed container disguised in a hole in the ground. He retrieved \$3,000 in cash before placing a one-terabyte external hard drive and two passport photos inside. The FBI later collected the contents of the dead drop container.

On Nov. 28, 2014, Awwad was observed entering his office at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard holding a cardboard tube about three feet long. Once in his office, Awwad opened the cardboard tube and took out several white sheets which appeared to be design schematics of an aircraft carrier. Awwad then placed the schematics on the floor of his office and photographed them. After approximately 45 minutes of viewing the schematics and taking photographs, Awwad placed all the schematics back in the cardboard tube and left his office.

Awwad made his initial appearance in federal court today, and is scheduled to appear for a detention hearing on Dec. 10, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. at the federal courthouse in Norfolk.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Norfolk Field Office and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, in cooperation with the Department of Navy. Prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States are Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin L. Hatch and Joseph E. DePadilla for the Eastern District of Virginia and Department of Justice, Trial Attorney Heather M. Schmidt for the Justice Department's National Security Division Counterespionage Section.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia or on PACER by searching for Case No. 2:14-cr-163.

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/navy-engineer-arrested-attempting-send-uss-gerald-r-ford-schematics-egyptian-government>